

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claims 1-26 (canceled).

27. (new): A cold cathode lamp comprising:
electrodes fixed on respective ends of a glass tube and being bar-shaped; and
a rare gas or a rare gas and mercury vapor sealed in said glass tube;
wherein at least a surface of the electrodes comprises a nitride, said nitride including at least one of hafnium (Hf), niobium (Nb) and tantalum (Ta).

28. (new): The cold cathode lamp according to claim 27, wherein said electrodes [themselves] comprise the nitride, said nitride including at least one of Hf, Nb and Ta.

29. (new): The cold cathode lam according to claim 27, wherein the surfaces of said electrodes are coated with the nitride, said nitride including at least one of Hf, Nb and Ta.

30. (new): A cold cathode lamp comprising:
electrodes fixed on respective ends of a glass tube and being tubular; and
a rare gas or a rare gas and mercury vapor sealed in said glass tube;
wherein at least a surface of the electrodes comprises a nitride, said nitride including at least one of titanium (Ti), zirconium (Zr), hafnium (Hf), niobium (Nb) and tantalum (Ta).

31. (new): The cold cathode lamp according to claim 30, wherein said electrodes comprise the nitride, said nitride including at least one of Ti, Zr, Hf, Nb and Ta.

32. (new): The cold cathode lamp according to claim 30, wherein the surface of said electrodes are coated with the nitride, said nitride including at least one of Ti, Zr, Hf, Nb and Ta.

33. (new): A cold cathode lamp comprising:
electrodes fixed on respective ends of a glass tube and being cup-shaped; and
a rare gas or a rare gas and mercury vapor sealed in said glass tube;
wherein at least a surface of the electrodes comprises a nitride, said nitride including at least one of titanium (Ti), zirconium (Zr), hafnium (Hf), niobium (Nb) and tantalum (Ta).

34. (new): The cold cathode lamp according to Claim 33, wherein said electrodes comprise the nitride, said nitride including at least one of Ti, Zr, Hf, Nb and Ta.

35. (new): The cold cathode lamp according to claim 33, wherein the surfaces of said electrodes are coated with the nitride, said nitride including at least one of Ti, Zr, Hf, Nb, and Ta.